Engaging development and religion: Methodological groundings

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Abstract

Religion is no longer a neglected dimension in development studies. Not only has the literature on religion and development blossomed over the last decade, but partnerships between international development institutions and faith communities have also multiplied. Yet, little is said about *how* such engagement is to take place beyond reference to general principles, and beyond the instrumental use of religion for achieving pre-determined international development goals. The aim of the paper is to propose some methodological grounding for engaging development and religion at the normative level. It does so on the basis of Amartya Sen's capability approach and Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home.* Although the latter is written by the global Catholic leader, it is addressed to every human being and urges a redefinition of the meaning of development. Our paper argues that the encyclical contains a potentially fruitful methodological proposal for engaging development and religion. We analyse how such a methodology has been applied in an exercise by the UK Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) to facilitate a global dialogue on development and religion in different geographical contexts. After addressing some of the limits of the methodology of *Laudato Si'*, we examine how Sen's normative conceptualisation of development and methodological proposal towards dialogue and reason about values – including religious ones – could complement some religious approaches and methodologies, such as in *Laudato Si'*, to yield innovative proposals for engaging development and religion.

Keywords: Religion, development ethics, Catholic Social Teaching, Amartya Sen, capability approach.

Highlights:

- The literature on religion and development has dealt mainly with the instrumental role of religion and has neglected dialogue about values.

- Development and religion cannot be separated. This entails methodological challenges for engagement that have not yet been addressed.

- The methodology of *Laudato Si'* contributes to linking normative assumptions about sustainable development with socio-environmental degradation.

- Amartya Sen's capability approach could provide a methodology for engaging development and religion that transcends religious traditions.

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1. Introduction

With 84 per cent of the world's population estimated to be affiliated to a religion,[1] international institutions and governments are increasingly acknowledging the importance of religion in development policy. International development organisations have over the last decade sought to establish partnerships with faith communities and have produced sets of guidelines on how to work together. In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched its 'Faith Partnership Principles'. It is based on the recognition of the prevalence of religion in the lives of people living in poverty, the trust commanded by religious leaders, and the proximity of religious organisations to the most marginalized and the effectiveness of the many services they provide (Alkire, 2006; Clarke and Jennings, 2007; Marshall and Van Saanen, 2007; Marshall, 2013; Narayan *et al*., 2000). DFID (2012) has selected three principles to underpin its work with faith groups: transparency (being clear about one's beliefs, values and objectives); mutual respect (respecting each other despite differences and disagreements); and understanding (gaining more knowledge of the values and ways of functioning of the respective organisations). In areas of disagreement, DFID's strategy is to respect different views whilst working at what can be commonly agreed upon.

Similarly, UNICEF published in 2012 a document about 'Partnering with Religious Communities for Children'. Based on the common ground shared by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the inherent dignity of every human life held in religious traditions, UNICEF works in partnership with faith communities. Like DFID, UNICEF focuses on principles such as transparency, mutual respect and understanding, whilst stressing the importance of cultivating certain attitudes like curiosity, openness, not being prejudiced, willingness to learn and sensitivity towards others. But unlike DFID, UNICEF (2012) recognises the heterogeneity of religious traditions, and the need to address areas of disagreements or sensitive issues beyond what is readily agreed upon. For example, it may be

easier to agree with a Catholic organisation on the care of HIV/AIDS orphans than on the distribution of condoms to prevent the spread of the virus, but this does not foreclose the need for discussion and sustained debate about the most effective means to protect human life. The equal dignity of boys and girls and access to similar opportunities is another area where disagreements between UNICEF and some faith groups may arise. However, UNICEF's document indicates that often discriminatory and harmful practices are based on cultural traditions that contravene religious principles. Hence there is a need to engage with the religious traditions themselves to re-examine their practices in the light of their own authoritative texts.

The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund have also established their own sets of working guidelines for partnering with faith communities (UNDP, 2014; UNFPA, 2009). All these guidelines mirror one another and emphasise the importance of partnering with faith communities and focusing on common ground in order to make poverty reduction more effective. The World Bank has not yet published similar guidelines but has convened several events over the last two decades, starting with the World Faiths Development Dialogue in 1998 and continuing to date with organising, in July 2015, a global conference on Religion and Sustainable Development.[2] Since 2014, 5he World Bank Group has had its own in-house 'Faith-Initiative Team'.[3]

In line with DFID's approach, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (GTZ) has been the latest to come on board by convening, in February 2016, an international conference on 'Partners for Change – Religions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (GTZ 2016). The initiative is based on the assumption 'that there can be no global paradigm shift towards sustainable development without the involvement of religious faiths' (GTZ, 2016, p. 26). Like other partnership initiatives, GTZ holds the view that partnerships are most successful when based on agreements between secular and religious

actors, case-by-case according to local needs and contextual factors, which therefore means including all members of faith communities, and not only their representative leaders. Another key aspect of GTZ partnerships is holding faith communities accountable to their members in order to prevent (ab)uses of religion that may be detrimental to people's lives.

Despite the proliferation of partnership guidelines within the realm of international development and donor organisations, and despite the rapid expansion of academic literature on religion and development since the turn of the millennium (see, among others, Carbonnier, 2013; Clarke *et al*., 2007; Clarke, 2013; Deneulin & Bano 2009; Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011; Fountain, 2013; Jones & Petersen, 2011; Levy, 2013; Lunn, 2009; Marshall & Van Saanen, 2007; Marshall, 2013; Olivier 2016; Rakodi, 2012; Smith, 2017; Tomalin, 2013, 2015; Tyndale, 2006), the subject of the methodology for engaging development policy and practice alongside religion remains little explored.[4]

International development organisations have a practical methodological approach for engaging with religion, particularly through establishing certain principles (e.g. mutual respect) and finding commonalities (e.g. human dignity). Nonetheless, this methodology and the partnership model it fosters, remains mainly instrumental. In most cases, the underlying rationale for partnering with faith communities is motivated by the search for more effective ways to reach vulnerable populations and to achieve pre-determined development goals more quickly and efficiently (Jones and Petersen, 2011). The argument often made is that faith communities are necessary partners in poverty reduction initiatives because they are often the only institutions functioning in fragile contexts, and because faith leaders are often more trusted than the state (Marshall and Van Saanen, 2007; Narayan *et al*., 2000).

Moreover, these partnerships tend to function on the premise that there are 'secular' development organisations on the one hand, and 'faith' communities on the other, as if they were separate entities, with the latter to be used for the former's ends. This division between

'secular' and 'religious' has been questioned in the literature (see Ager and Ager, 2011; Calhoun *et al*., 2011; Deneulin & Bano, 2009; Hovland, 2007; Leurs, 2012; Linden, 2007; Olivier 2016; Smith, 2017).[5] Given the entanglement between religion and development, the issue is not so much how the secular and religious worlds can be compared to each other, or if 'faith-based' organisations have a comparative advantage over 'secular' organisations because, for instance, their partnerships lead to better development outcomes. Rather, following Smith (2017, p. 69), the question is: How do development actors, religious *and* secular, apply their beliefs and values to development programs, and how does the local context influence the application of these beliefs and values? Smith (2017) proposes a framework, in the form of a number of questions, to explore the links between the beliefs and practices of the various development actors, whether 'secular', 'faith-based' or 'missionary', as all have beliefs that influence their development practices. However, he does not propose a methodology for different actors to cooperate on the basis of their respective beliefs and practices.

The aim of this paper is to address this, and to examine how all actors, whether motivated by a faith or none, can cooperate to bring about sustainable and holistic development. As the methodology to underpin such cooperation remains under-explored, we propose a specific methodology for engaging development goals with the founding ideas, beliefs and practices of faith communities. We do so by analysing an engagement exercise between development and religion based on Pope Francis's (2015) encyclical-letter *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home*, combined with Amartya Sen's capability approach. The paper is divided as follows: it starts with discussing some examples of engagement between development and religion, highlighting methodological challenges. It then analyses Pope Francis's methodology of engaging development and religious traditions, as expressed in his social encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The encyclical has been selected because it engages religion and development in an integral way, i.e., it is not limited to a particular development area and it

integrates the current social and the ecological state of affairs. The paper then critically examines the encyclical's methodology through how it has been applied in a global dialogue exercise initiated by the UK Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) between October 2015 and September 2016 in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Kenya, Colombia, Bangladesh, and the UK. Addressing some of the limits of the exercise's methodology, the paper argues that Amartya Sen's capability approach to development could provide an effective complement to facilitate the engagement between development and religion. The paper concludes by outlining the transformative potential of such an engagement for both development and religious practice.

2. Some methodological challenges of engagement

As highlighted in the introductory section, partnerships between development organisations and faith communities have spread over the last decade.[6] In this section we select four examples, relevant for both development and religion, which contain both positive and negative instances of engagement and bring out critical methodological questions.

A first example of the multiple partnerships initiatives was the Ebola outbreak in 2014-15 in West Africa. Despite the international rhetoric about the importance of involving faith communities in development efforts, national governments and international actors were slow in recognizing the significance of religious actors in addressing the outbreak (Marshall & Smith, 2015; CAFOD *et al.*, 2015). The way funerals were conducted, the practices surrounding physical contact between people, the centrality of religious institutions in people's daily lives – all these were realities on the ground that required government actors and faith communities to engage with one another in joint actions against Ebola. For instance, training pastors to help people deal safely with dead bodies such as the washing of bodies in preparation

for burial, or addressing Sunday congregations on health issues, proved effective in changing public health practices.

A second example is an initiative of a non-governmental organization in Nigeria to involve Islamic leaders in eradicating the practice of child marriage (Walker, 2015; Wodon, 2015). At first, the leaders were reluctant to engage with the external development intervention because they viewed ending the practice as a 'secular' agenda. However, when informed about the health issues related to child marriage, they started to make public pronouncements on the negative consequences of child marriage on girls' health, and to invite parents to make their own decision about the age of marriage, bearing in mind the long-term impact of their decision on their children.

A third, related example is an intervention by a non-governmental organization aimed at stopping the environmentally harmful practice of dynamite fishing in Zanzibar (UNFPA, 2014, pp. 38-39). State authorities had made dynamite fishing illegal, and offenders were jailed. Yet, fishermen continued fishing that way. The intervention consisted of engaging the fishermen directly using a religious text (rather than through the religious leaders as such). What finally ended the practice was a year-long training for fishermen that included a study of the Qur'anic verses about nature as a gift from Allah and that therefore needed to be protected.

A fourth example is about gender and violence against women. In its partnership document, UNICEF (2012) highlights that, despite upholding the idea of the inherent dignity of every human being, most religions are also perpetuating patriarchy and male domination, denying women positions of leadership and authority, and even condoning or being indifferent towards violence against women. In areas where religion goes against development goals such as those of gender equality, engagement can become complex and less conducive to women's wellbeing.

There exists several initiatives aiming to reduce gender-based violence in Africa, and which include both Christian and Muslim contexts. In their review of such initiatives, Le Roux *et al*. (2016) point out the central role of engagement with religious texts. Because many of these texts have been used by male religious leaders to condone violence against women, they need to be re-interpreted, especially to make male leaders aware of their own socio-cultural bias. Nonetheless, the authors conclude that these initiatives yield limited results: not all male religious leaders were willing to participate, and many did not want to question the patriarchal bias. Le Roux *et al.* (2016) suggest that long-term involvement and continued support and mentoring is required in order to promote the personal transformation of faith leaders, a transformation needed to make the engagement between religion and development conducive for women's wellbeing (Le Roux *et al*., 2016, p. 31).

The above examples help bring to light some fundamental questions about the methodology of the development-religion engagement. A first question is about contextual relevance: Do development efforts have to engage with religion whenever people express religious beliefs or religious group belonging?

In the above examples, the answer to that question is positive. It was the specific social and cultural context that made development actors see the need to engage with religion. In the Ebola crisis, it was because of the significance of religious practices surrounding dead bodies in transmitting the disease, and the significance of religious congregations as places to distribute information in hard-to-reach locations, that religious actors and practices were engaged with by development actors, albeit late (CAFOD *et al*., 2015). Engaging with religion did not override the need to build effective state-run public health systems, but proved to be an extremely effective policy in the specific context of Western Africa and the Ebola epidemic. In the example of the intervention to end the practice of child marriage in Nigeria (Walker, 2015), it was also the social and cultural context that made engagement with religion highly

relevant. The moral authority of Islamic leaders played a mediating role in shaping people's opinions and social behaviours, in this case for improving the lives of young girls.

Similarly, in the case of eliminating gender-based violence in Africa (Le Roux *et al*. 2016), engagement with religion was necessary in order to end violent practices against women because these practices were based on certain interpretations of religious texts. Hence, faith leaders, instead of the communities at large, were chosen as the intervention targets, not only because of the respect they were accorded, but also because of their role as gatekeepers to the community and as official interpreters of the religious texts. It was again the cultural context of religion in the fishermen's lives in Zanzibar that made engagement particularly relevant for ending a harmful environmental practice. However, while religion may be prevalent in people's lives, this does not necessarily mean that development actors must engage with religion in all circumstances. The specific local context is often critical for determining engagement.[7]

In addition to the question of contextual relevance, the above examples also reveal the importance of timing and of who are the engagement partners (i.e. which religious actors and which resources): Should religion be engaged with only after other initiatives at pursuing a certain development objective have proved ineffective? Should engagement take place with the religious leaders and those who have authority to interpret texts or codify practices, or with ordinary members of the community? Should it be about religious practices and texts? And if so, which ones?

In the Ebola crisis example, the engagement with religion only started after many lives had already been lost and other efforts at changing practices and informing the population had failed. The engagement went beyond religious leaders, involving religious organizations and networks. Sunday religious congregations played a crucial role in informing people in remote locations of the need to change their funeral practices in order to prevent further deaths. In addition, religious leaders were able to approach the situation in a holistic way, by including

health and medical issues with faith beliefs and practices (CAFOD *et al*., 2015). Using biomedical information from international agencies, the leaders were able to change messages of fear into messages of hope and compassion. Due to the trust people had in imams and priests in that region, communities were willing to give up some practices related to burials, such as washing bodies. Equally, the leaders were able to present these changes in rituals according to religious values of compassion and the understanding of afterlife concerns (CAFOD *et al*., 2015, p.7). If such engagements with religion had taken place earlier, the dramatic loss of life could have been reduced.

The question of timing was also pivotal in the example of dynamite fishing in Zanzibar. Only when the legal means did not work were religious texts engaged with to make the fishermen aware of the detrimental effects of their practice. However, had the practice continued to be legal, the religious argument that dynamite-fishing was destroying Allah's creation might not have been sufficient on its own to end it. In terms of actors and resources, engagement took place with the religious members of the fishing community, rather than with religious leaders, and with a religious text rather than religious practices – which proved to be an effective approach.

In the examples of child marriage in Nigeria and the elimination of gender-based violence in Africa, the question of which actors and which resources were important for engagement was critical. In the child marriage case, the engagement took place with religious leaders due to their role as opinion shapers. But the actual actors were the children's parents, who had been invited to reflect on what was in the best interests of their daughters (in the light of their faith),[8] rather than on seeking to apply a rigid interpretation of religious texts to make decisions about the girls' lives. In comparison, in the initiatives reviewed by Le Roux *et al*. (2016), it was direct engagement of faith leaders with scriptural texts that served as the entry-point to addressing gender-based violence in Africa, although the initiatives' success was

limited as patriarchal biases and norms perpetuating gender inequality remain difficult to change.

In sum, the above examples reveal that engaging with religion in development can make a significant difference in promoting certain development objectives, such as the containment of a deadly virus, giving girls greater access to life opportunities, protecting fish stocks and, to a limited extent, eliminating some forms of violence against women. The examples also reveal that, in many different regions, religious leadership plays a pivotal role in social life.

Addressing the questions of contextual relevance, timing, and religious actors and resources has an extra difficulty since the boundaries between what constitutes 'development' and 'religion' are blurred. In the above examples, protecting people's health and caring for the environment were also 'religious' objectives, or ways of honouring God. These objectives were endorsed precisely because people understood them in religious terms (like the washing of hands as a practice of 'loving God and thy neighbour as yourself' in the Ebola example). However, not everything held to be a 'religious' objective has a positive impact on people's lives. In the gender-based violence example, practices detrimental to women's lives were often understood in religious terms. For example, religious texts were used (primarily by men) to justify beliefs that women need to be physically disciplined if they are perceived to have done something wrong (Le Roux *et al*., 2016, p. 29). This is why engaging with the religious texts and those who have authority to interpret them is critical in contexts where religious leaders are highly respected and trusted.

This complexity of the dynamic interaction between development and religion underlines the need for a methodology of engagement that involves all actors and their beliefs and values. None of the partnership documents by international development organisations briefly reviewed above discussed a methodology for engagement beyond reference to general principles of 'mutual respect' and 'mutual understanding'. However, one document, emerging

from a faith community, has recently attempted to establish a feasible method. In the next section we examine the methodology for engaging development and religion proposed in the encyclical issued in June 2015 by the leader of the Catholic Church: *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home.*

3. A methodological proposal from *Laudato Si'*

As the newest encyclical of the Catholic social tradition (LS 15),[9] *Laudato Si'* is primarily a religious statement. It is not a political, an economic, or an environmental statement, but a religious one related to all those areas of life. The title of the document confirms this. It is taken from a verse of St Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures*. Although it implicitly refers to God ('praise be...to God, to my Lord' opens the *Canticle* – '*Laudato si' oh mi signore'*), the title does not mention 'God'. This shows its intention, right from the start, to be an inclusive religious statement (aligned with the belief that God is the creator of the universe) that echoes a common socio-ecological concern of 'numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians and civic groups' and 'other churches... and religions' (LS 7): the need 'to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development' (LS 13).

Our 'common home' has a common problem, caused by common human activity, which affects everyone, but in particular the poorest. In an attempt to respond to this unprecedented 'common' socio-ecological crisis, Pope Francis in this document invites every citizen of the world (not just Catholics) to enter into a dialogue by which we can re-define the idea of development and improve the way we live together, in our 'common home'. He argues that religion can make a contribution towards finding solutions to the current socio-ecological crisis, which he contends has been caused by the current mainstream development model and its rapid pace (cf LS 18).[10] This is why, when discussing development, the interconnection between social and environmental matters must be jointly addressed.

In terms of its methodology, *Laudato Si'* follows the inductive approach of Catholic Social Teaching:[11] 'seeing' the reality, particularly through the eyes of the poor and disadvantaged, and alongside the best science available, in partnership with other churches; 'judging' it in the light of the Christian Gospel and the tradition of the Church; and 'acting' or promoting decisions according to what we see and discern.

Within the Catholic tradition, the 'see-judge-act' method, which has strong Biblical roots, was first embraced in modern times by Pope Francis' predecessor, Pope John XXIII (1961). He shifted the methodology of social analysis in the Church from the classical deductive method, which basically 'understands reality in terms of the eternal, the immutable, and the unchanging', towards an inductive historical consciousness approach, which 'gives more importance to the particular, the contingent, the historical and the individual' (Curran, 1988, p. 427). The method has the advantage of putting people's experiences at the heart of the Church's teaching, which is key for engaging development and religion. If the sources of Catholic teaching on social issues were purely based on previous Papal documents or statements, then the experiences of the poor are rarely to be taken into account. But when experience is placed at the forefront of the method, then the struggles for oppression and liberation underpin the teaching (Dorr, 2016). Technically speaking, this inductive method came to be known as the 'hermeneutical or pastoral circle'. It is based on the idea that there can be no theology without a prior historical reality, and that God cannot be found in texts from the past without discerning God's reality in the present (Land & Henriot, 1989).[12]

Although *Laudato Si'* does not explicitly reveal its methodology, it is apparent in the way its chapters are structured. Regarding 'seeing', Chapter 1 (*What is Happening to Our Common Home?*) provides a spiritual reading of the best available scientific data on the environment to 'touch us deeply and provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary that follows' (LS 15), i.e., the itinerary of change needed to address environmental

degradation, which, the document emphasises, is always intertwined with social degradation. Chapter 2 (*The Gospel of Creation*) emphasises the wealth of Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly in biblical texts about the link between work, progress, and care of nature, and in theological reflections about these texts, as pivotal to in-depth analyses of the anthropological roots of the socio-ecological crisis.

Regarding the 'judging', Chapter 3 (*Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis*) proposes a critical negative judgement of the current model of development. It argues that a society controlled by technology has a misplaced idea of the role of free will because it conceives of humans as absolute dominators of the world, with no limitations to their actions, belittling their capacity to seek for what is truly good for our 'common home', and not be indifferent to the social and ecological degradation identified as 'the cry of the earth and of the poor'. Chapter 4 (*Integral Ecology*) provides a positive judgement by introducing 'integral ecology' as a paradigm able to articulate the fundamental relationships of the person: with 'God', with 'oneself', with 'other human beings', and with 'creation'. It also stresses the need to acknowledge the interconnectedness between all dimensions of life when addressing development challenges. Because of this interconnection, the Pope emphasises that 'we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Hence, strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature' (LS 139).

Regarding the 'acting' stage, Chapter 5 (*Lines of Approach and Action*) provides a series of guidelines for the renewal of international, national and local policies, as well as for decision-making processes in the public and business sector. Rather than a doctrinal approach, it is an invitation for an honest dialogue, where politics and economics, religion and science can improve their relationships for the betterment of our 'common home'.[13]

Focusing on concrete actions, Chapter 6 (*Ecological Education and Spirituality*) points out that actual change is impossible without motivation and a process of education. Pope Francis sees the role of education in development as not merely about increasing scientific information or consciousness raising, or even about the prevention of environmental risks, but also about cultivating social virtues that can help people make selfless ecological commitments (LS 211) and develop a critical understanding of the 'myth' of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mindset (e.g. individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market) (LS 210). Moreover, education also involves promoting a new way of thinking about human beings, society and our relationship with nature (LS 215), which will eventually promote a simpler and more 'grateful' way of living, concerned with the needs of the poor and the environment (LS 214). The Pope also underlines the contribution that Christian spirituality offers to inspire the needed changes in lifestyles and consumer habits (in spiritual terms, an 'ecological conversion'). He emphasizes that 'celebrating' God's love and the goodness of creation brings about hope and joy, and is pivotal to 'seeing' more clearly, 'judging' more wisely, and 'acting' more effectively in terms of the promotion of development.

In sum, the structure of *Laudato Si'* follows the inductive and pastoral circle methodology of Catholic Social Teaching, of 'seeing' the reality of current development, particularly through the eyes of the disadvantaged and with the help of the best science available; 'judging' it in the light of the Christian tradition; and promoting lines of 'action' that correspond to the process of observation and discernment. Those lines of action aim at promoting a more holistic approach to development, based on dialogue and participation. Put differently, for *Laudato Si'*, an engagement between religion and development, which can bring about a change in the way we foster development, is only possible through thorough processes of dialogue at all levels. The methodology proposed by the document remains however at a theoretical level. In order to examine further how such methodological proposal can contribute

to engaging development and religion at a policy and practical level, in the next session we explore how this methodology has been applied in a concrete engagement initiative.

4. Application of the *Laudato Si'* methodology

In response to Pope Francis' call to redefine our notion of progress and our practice of development (cf LS 3; 13-4; 194), the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), based in England and Wales, facilitated an international dialogue with its partners in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Kenya, Colombia, and Bangladesh, and its UK stakeholders, to discuss how a new model of development could be built. The dialogue took place between October 2015 and September 2016, and was conducted in the form of one- to two-day workshops in the countries themselves, with staff of local CAFOD partner organizations and representatives of local communities.[14] The exercise yielded some important insights for building a methodology for engaging development and religion.[15] In particular, it has helped facilitate a concrete and fruitful dialogue among participants – not all of them Catholics – about the model of development to which they aspire, especially in their own cultural and religious contexts, and strengthening the development-religion link.

The methodology of the exercise followed closely the one proposed by *Laudato Si'*. Firstly, participants were invited to 'see' what is good – from God's viewpoint as informed by Biblical stories of creation, from the Church's perspective as informed by *Laudato Si'*, and from their own experience and context. A similar process was conducted to 'see' what is damaging the 'seen' goodness, particularly what damage may be done in the name of development. Secondly, participants were asked to revisit Pope Francis' 'judgement' on what hinders and promotes development, and then to provide their own judgement, including their perspective on 'integral ecology' (the integration of the ecological and social aspects of development). Finally, after listening to the proposals for action in *Laudato Si'*, participants

reflected on what they believe they ought to do differently in four aspects of life: 'myself', 'my family', 'my community' and 'my nation/world'. In order to explicitly include the spiritual aspect highlighted in *Laudato Si'*, they celebrated God's gift of creation and the role they play in it as responsible stewards.[16] Discussing all the findings of these dialogues exceeds the scope of this paper, and our analysis is limited to those that offer insights for the methodological groundings of engaging development and religion.

During the discussions of the 'seeing' stage, there were no major differences across the continents; instead, only complementary observations of social and ecological degradation were made. In the 'judging' stage, five major themes emerged: technology, politics, urbanisation, economics, and culture and nature. Participants unanimously agreed on the ambiguity of these themes in 'development' (i.e. each having its advantages and disadvantages), but they nevertheless emphasized the importance of different aspects of each in their respective contexts. For example, while Pope Francis is concerned with the structural problems behind technological development –because he sees them as being controlled by those with economic power – participants accentuated the advantages of technology for the poor. While Pope Francis sees politicians as key drivers for change, participants were far more sceptical about their roles, especially because of corruption. Where the Pope underlines the structural issues behind urbanization and violence, participants focused on the day-to-day problems city dwellers suffer due to insecurity and violence, although they also point out the opportunities that cities can provide to help fulfil people's dreams. With regard to economics, participants agreed with the Pope about the need for urgent change in the global economic system, although the means for doing so differed from country to country. While some proposed a radical understanding and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, others claimed for a different new model altogether. In addition, participants agreed with and added to the Pope's analysis of the devastating effects of a consumerist and individualistic

culture, as well as the threat from a global culture that does not respect diversity. However, a key difference was clearly evident under the theme of culture: the link between gender equality and development. Participants across all workshops saw gender equality as an absolutely vital element of sustainable development and integral ecology, yet this topic is completely absent from *Laudato Si'*.

Regarding the 'acting' stage, all participants agreed with *Laudato Si'* on the need to promote an education that goes beyond mere instruction or awareness raising. They also mentioned the need to use time differently. They unanimously expressed the importance of dedicating more time to personal and community reflection on how to relate to each other and to nature; more time to discussing the best way of moving forward; and, strikingly, more time for contemplation. They all stressed the need to slow down in order to redefine their priorities, plans and development programmes. Participants' emphasis on 'time' echoes Pope Francis' concern with 'rapidification': an intensified pace of life and work that promotes constant change without questioning if such change is harming the world and humanity (LS 18), and that prevents women and men from being attentive to 'the beauty that is in the world' (LS 91).

Another area of agreement between participants and *Laudato Si'* regarding the 'acting' stage is the need for *joint actions*. This collaborative understanding of promoting development applies to all relationships, from inter-personal to national and international, and includes religious and non-religious actors. It also implies that there are different responsibilities, according to positions of power and what resources are available. But joint actions in themselves cannot lead to sustainable development if they are not rooted in actual dialogical processes where the voices of the powerless – and the 'cry of the earth' (LS 49) – are truly heard. Participants agreed with the Pope that joint actions comprise the need to rethink lifestyles, seeking a simpler way of living and using natural resources wisely. Nonetheless, there were some different emphases according to the local context. For example, participants

from Ethiopia discussed the Africa-2063 Agenda,[17] and the convenience of using both *Laudato Si'* and the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change together[18] as resources to influence the Agenda. Participants from Bangladesh argued that joint actions require the promotion of peace and reconciliation, which is key for their multi-ethnic, multi-religious country. Participants from the UK highlighted the need for long-term planning in politics, vital in the context of 'Brexit' negotiations. Participants in Sierra Leone underlined the need for shared action to generate structures for recycling, which is currently missing in their context.

Another area of the 'acting' stage that participants of all countries highlighted, which echoes *Laudato Si'*, is the need for dialogue among families, communities and nations on socio-economic and ecological issues, within complementary approaches given their specific contexts. Those in the UK suggested that members of churches, NGOs and different levels of governments should promote public dialogue about the social and environmental consequences of the current model of development, and felt that leaders should be held accountable for it. Those in Bangladesh stressed the role that the Catholic Church, and the Caritas network,[19] can provide in terms of promoting dialogue. They argued that rather than battling with governments, the Church's networks could provide support as a way of exercising 'subsidiarity'. Participants in Ethiopia also mentioned the contribution that civil society makes to governance and accountability, particularly in raising awareness of environmental destruction in the name of development. Whilst participants of all countries agreed with the fact that the 'poor' – whether communities or nations – must take part in the dialogue and be heard, those in Ethiopia and Colombia went further and argued that 'participation' comes with 'responsibility'. By this they meant, on the one hand, that their voices, as part of those communities living in poverty or affected by environmental issues, are not to be raised just in protest or asking for help, but they also have substantive contributions to make about the path development takes. On the other hand, the 'powerful' voices, usually representing sectors of

the population who contribute the most to environmental problems in the name of development, cannot participate in the dialogue as mere equals, since they need to assume greater responsibility. Moreover, the participants claimed that the participation of people living in poverty (men and women) means that different voices of different oppressed groups must be heard on a level equal to the voices of the 'rich' or to those minorities whose voices are already included in the national dialogue.

The see-judge-act methodology followed in this religion-development engagement initiative – in a series of workshops on how to redefine the notion of progress (cf LS 148) – is not without limitations. First, who gets to decide the criteria for 'seeing' the reality that needs to be addressed? *Laudato Si'* states clearly that the 'seeing' must be as ecumenical and inclusive as possible, particularly including the view of those who are marginalised from the benefits of current development efforts. Yet, when this happens, how are their views going to match competing and/or contrasting views? In the CAFOD exercise, given that most participants of the global South were representatives or partners of communities living in poverty, the 'seeing' stage did not generate serious disagreements. If, however, the views of executive officers of international financial institutions, for instance, were included in the dialogical process, what kind of criteria could be proposed to generate a 'seeing' that takes into account the different views? We suggest a methodology of engagement in development offering more guidelines on the 'seeing' stage could provide a relevant and helpful way forward. Second, *Laudato Si'* proposes to 'judge' the reality as seen in the light of the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church. But are ancient religious texts relevant for today's development context? And if so, how are we to include other religious traditions that are based on other sacred texts and sources of authority? In the CAFOD exercise, given that most participants were Christians, the biblical stories of creation from the Book of Genesis were well received as a source to assess development models. However, would stories from Buddha or from the Koran have had the

same reception to 'judge' development? And what would have happened if Christians had not been a majority in the dialogue? We suggest a methodology of engagement rooted in the social sciences, which accepts the inclusion of religious texts in democratic public debate to evaluate and foster development policies, would be useful in this regard. Finally, although *Laudato Si'* calls for a dialogical process of reflection to critically analyse reality before taking action, it lacks a concrete proposal of how this process could be conducted. In the CAFOD exercise, the interlocutors selected were already partners in development projects; despite their different contexts, they had similar aims, which made it easier to discuss (and even argue) on lines of action in development. If, however, other development actors had been invited (e.g. government agencies, or representative of mining companies), the process of dialogue would have been more complex, and would have required a solid methodological ground that does not come from the religious side.

The next section argues that Amartya Sen's capability approach to development, which is not linked to a particular faith tradition, contains several features that makes it a useful complement to the 'seeing' and 'judging' stages of the methodology in *Laudato Si'* . Namely, Sen's approach shares an analogical inductive and deliberative methodology with the Pope's, for it similarly embraces a normative approach to development where fundamental ethical questions are asked in order to define development. In the next section, we examine these features further and explore how Sen's capability approach can complement the *Laudato Si'* methodology and improve it.

5. Complementing the methodology with Sen's capability approach

The works of Amartya Sen have not dealt much with the subject of religion. Where they do, it is mainly to highlight the divisive and conflictual character of religion – particularly when a person's identity is reduced to her religious beliefs, or to her association to a religious

community (Sen, 2006). Another reference to religion in Sen's work is related to religious texts, some of which he considers as classic art or literature and hence as able tools with which to illustrate a philosophical argument. This is the case in an epic story from the Hindu *Mahabharata* to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of ethical 'consequentialism' and 'proceduralism' (Sen, 2000); or the case of the Biblical parable of *The Good Samaritan* to discuss global responsibility and universal concern for others (Sen, 2009). Sen (2014) also makes explicit reference to the life of Buddha as a major influence in his works, particularly on the reality of human suffering as a starting point for reflection and action, and the need for dialogue and reasoning to solve disagreement and take actions to remove suffering. However, beyond the negative assessment of the role of religion in people's lives and the illustrative use of religious narratives to underpin philosophical arguments, there are several features of Sen's works, specifically in his capability approach to development, which make his ideas a suitable complement to *Laudato Si'*s methodology of engagement between development and religion.

Sen's capability approach probably needs no introduction for development scholars and practitioners.[20] At its most fundamental level, it is a moral approach to assess and judge realities from the perspective of human freedom, in its dual aspects of wellbeing and agency (Sen, 1985). Wellbeing, Sen argues, is best assessed in the capability space rather than the utility or income space (Alkire, 2002; Brighouse & Robeyns 2010; Sen, 1980). The capability space is composed of 'functionings' (beings and doings), and 'capabilities' which are a 'person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being' (Sen, 1993, p. 30). The evaluation space can be composed of 'elementary functionings such as being alive, being well nourished and in good health, moving about freely' or 'more complex functionings such as having self-respect and respect for others and taking part in the life of the community or appearing in public without shame' (Sen, 2017a, p. 357). The contrast between a fasting monk and a starving child has often been given to illustrate the difference between functioning and capability, both

experience the same 'functioning', being under-nourished, but one has the choice not to, while the other does not. However, Sen does not prioritize capabilities over functionings; both belong to the same informational space (Sen, 1992, 2017a). The priority given to freedom, or capability over functioning, is a more zealous interpretation of the capability approach than Amartya Sen first conceived (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007).[21]

When applied to questions of development or justice, the capability approach can be approximated as an 'approach to justice that concentrates on people's capability to lead the kind of life they have reason to value – the things that they can do, or be' (Sen, 2017a, p. 356); or an approach to development that sees development as a process of 'capability expansion' (Sen, 1988, 1989), a process of expanding 'the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value' (Sen, 1999, p. 87).[22]

A first feature of Sen's capability approach, which makes it particularly relevant for complementing the 'seeing' stage of *Laudato Si*'s methodology, is its normative character. Sen has brought back into the heart of development the foundational ethical questions such as 'what may foster "the good of man"' or 'how should one live?' (Sen, 1987, pp. 3-4). The capability approach is a value-based approach to development. It questions the informational basis used to make value judgments about what counts as 'development'. For too long, development has been judged using information about income or consumption levels, what Sen (1988) calls the 'opulence approach'. He argues that the capability space constitutes a more adequate informational basis to assess progress or development, because it includes information about the kinds of lives people are living (Sen, 1993, 1999, 2017a). *Laudato Si'* coincides with the capability approach in challenging the assessment of development merely in the utility or income space. Both the capability approach and *Laudato Si'* argue for a more holistic approach to development. Both also consider that there is an urgent need to recover the ethical dimensions of economics and technology, as well as to resume the value-based nature of the

social sciences.[23] Nonetheless, in order to provide a basis for eventual disagreements on the criteria for 'seeing' reality, as mentioned above, the capability approach offers a broader basis than *Laudato Si'*, not only due to its normative yet pluralistic approach, but also due to its roots in the social sciences and its paradigmatic character and wide acceptance in development studies.

A second feature of the capability approach that complements the 'seeing' stage of *Laudato Si'* is that it takes the reality of people's lives, and what each person is able to be and do in a given situation, as the starting point for promoting development.[24] Sen (2009, 2017a) proposes a comparative approach to justice that starts with making comparisons about social realizations, and especially whether they are able to achieve a certain level of elementary functionings. Judgments regarding 'capability deprivation', i.e., the 'lack of opportunity to lead a minimally acceptable life' (Sen, 2017a, p. 26), are the starting point for evaluating states of affairs and deciding what ought to be done. In that respect, the capability approach joins the focus of *Laudato Si'* on human suffering as a starting point to reflect on development, and as the basis upon which to decide the actions required in given situations. However, in order to listen to the 'cry of the poor and the cry of the earth' (LS 49), and 'to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it' (LS 19), i.e. to take action, the capability approach provides some tools beyond the Catholic tradition. It proposes to evaluate states of affairs from the perspective of human wellbeing, and to identify which conditions are lacking in order for people to live well, or to flourish. This involves taking 'capability deprivation' as the starting point for engagement between *all* development actors, independently of their faith tradition or none, hence providing a robust basis for assessing, or 'judging', development – which is the second stage of the *Laudato Si'* method.[25]

Yet, because every context of capability deprivation will demand a different response, inclusive processes of 'public reasoning' are needed. Through this emphasis on processes of public discussion, as critical for the formation of values, Sen's approach indirectly opens up the possibility of including religious traditions, and the values they carry, to the dialogical process, in particular the values of compassion that all religions embrace. Therefore, the capability approach can offer a more inclusive and open basis than *Laudato Si'* by not being linked to any particular religious tradition while at the same time being able to include them.

Within the capability approach, compassion is linked to the values of sympathy and commitment towards the life of others (e.g. towards those who suffer from hunger),[26] which are values formed in processes of public discussion (Sen 2009, 2015, 2017a). The value of sympathy is particularly associated with the ability of seeing the world from another person's perspective, which is taken from Adam Smith's impartial spectator (Sen, 2002) and that of 'bringing in distant perspectives' (Sen, 2017a, p. 431).[27] This 'sympathetic' element of Sen's account of public discussion resonates with an ethos common to religious traditions regarding love and compassion. But in the case of *Laudato Si',* it echoes what the Pope refers to as the extra motivation that religion can provide for a change in development by linking social and ecological commitments with love and compassion (LS 64). In this sense, what *Laudato Si'* and CAFOD's dialogical exercise add is the extension of the sympathetic element to nature, and the interconnectedness between human and ecological degradation, which links capability deprivation with their structural causes. Hence, and even furthering Sen's proposal, to enter into the perspective of the 'cry of the poor' and 'of the earth' (LS 49) can lead to questioning one's own lifestyle, because of its impact on other people's lives and on the environment, and to questioning the structures underpinning such a lifestyle.

According to *Laudato Si',* the current complexity in development, especially the multiple causes of poverty and ecological crisis, can be an opportunity to bring religion and

development closer as 'no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it' (LS 63).[28] The Pope is not shy in proposing the language of 'biblical narratives' as a way of better understanding and assessing relationships of human beings among themselves and with nature, particularly because the narratives help to emphasize the dignity of each person, 'who is not something, but someone', as well as the inner good of nature, which is not to be seen merely as 'resources' (LS 65). Nonetheless, to realistically include religious narratives into an inclusive dialogue on development, the proposal needs to transcend religious traditions. In this sense, because biblical narratives deal with perennial dilemmas of human social existence, such as issues of 'power' or 'oppression', they could still be referred to by people outside the religious tradition to seek solutions to social problems, as Sen did with the parable of *The Good Samaritan* (Sen, 2009, pp. 171-172). As pointed out earlier, such religious narratives can be considered as 'great art' or 'classics' that transcend the limitations of historical or geographical contexts,[29] and as such help those involved in public reasoning processes 'to open new horizons, to stimulate thought, to expand the mind and the heart' (Pope Francis, 2013, paragraph 256).

This methodological complementarity between the capability approach and *Laudato Si'* does not mean that both approaches are compatible in all matters.[30] For example, whilst both may agree about dialogical public processes to promote justice, they disagree on the ontological notion of the good and of nature, which Sen has never admitted. Also, while both approaches agree on the critical respect for human freedom in development, they disagree on the emphasis of 'relationality'. Whilst for *Laudato Si'*, the promotion and safeguarding of human dignity (and freedom) can only be done as a community, the capability approach places more emphasis on individual freedom. Moreover, Sen's strong emphasis on the gender dimension of justice (Sen, 2015) seems to clash with the Catholic tradition in general,[31] and with the absence of this topic in *Laudato Si'* in particular.

Still, this apparent 'rivalry' does not prevent an exploration of the methodological complementarity between the two approaches in order to engage with religion and development. Both propose to start with reality rather than with ideas or ideologies, especially with the reality of those in need (those who experience capability deprivation). Paradoxically, this very 'rivalry' could turn out to be a space for potential complementarity. For instance, Sen's concern for human freedom is echoed in *Laudato Si'*, although the latter is more explicit about the misuse of human freedom and how it has contributed to the problems of current socio-ecological degradation. With regard to their shared focus on dialogical processes and their 'rivalry' about relationality and human freedom, the methodology of *Laudato Si'*, as shown in the CAFOD initiative, can lead to actions that had not been thought of by any participant prior to the dialogue, such as the need to devote more time for contemplation (regardless of an individual's particular beliefs), more quality time for inter-personal relations, and the need to connect respect for the earth with gender equality. These findings indicate how processes of engagement between development and religion could not only transform people's conceptions of development, but could also improve and change some development policies underpinned by faith-based agencies – as well as some ideas and practices of religious traditions such as gender in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, another insight from the exercise is that joint actions require a clear attribution of responsibilities according to one's impact on ecological (and social) degradation. This includes communal and social responsibilities (what *Laudato Si'* refers to as communal ecological conversion), as well as individual ones, hence complementing the capability approach vision of individual freedom and responsibility.

6. Concluding remarks

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals to define the development agenda for the next generation. The 17 goals and 169 indicators have

already generated a significant amount of criticism.[32] Yet, there is a global consensus that some radical action needs to be taken at all policy levels to reduce poverty and promote human development, whilst protecting humanity's 'common home'. Disagreements about the 'best' course of action to address the socio-environmental crisis cannot be a reason for inaction. We might otherwise encounter what is known in economics as a 'Buridan ass' situation, a story where an ass starves to death because it could not decide which of two stacks of hay was 'best' (Sen, 2017b).[33]

Over the last decade, international development organisations are increasingly seeking to engage with religion, particularly because of its instrumental role in poverty reduction. Religions also contain rich resources to address the key ethical questions that arise in development processes, such as 'how should one live' and 'how should a society move into the future' (Gasper, 2012). Yet, the methodology for such engagement has remained unexplored.

Based on a document that discusses the relationship between development and religion, Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si',* we have proposed a specific methodology to engage development and religion at the level of values, and of the actions emerging from them. This methodology is grounded on three circular stages, 'seeing' a given reality, 'judging' it on the basis of some normative framework, and 'acting' to transform it. A positive experience of applying this methodology was described in the exercise conducted by the faith-based organisation CAFOD. Still, given the limitations of this methodology, especially the under-specification of concrete lenses for the 'seeing', and the religious tradition-bound normative framework for the 'judging', we have proposed to complement it with Sen's capability approach. We have argued that such an approach to development strengthens the 'seeing' stage, particularly through its normative criteria of capability deprivation to evaluate states of affairs, and complements the 'judging' stage with its emphasis on public reasoning processes and the kinds of values which underpin such processes (such as sympathy and commitment).

It is in the 'acting' stage that complementing the methodology of *Laudato Si'* with Sen's capability approach for engaging development and religion could yield the most fruitful, and perhaps unexpected, outcomes. The CAFOD engagement exercise which followed the methodology of the Pope's encyclical, and which took place in different geographical contexts, has already signalled some of this. Gender equality was not an initial priority in *Laudato Si'*, yet it emerged as a fundamental one after the dialogue took place. Similarly, the need to spend more time in nature and with family and friends was not an action that development organisations saw as a priority before the dialogical exercise took place.

It has been more than two decades that international development organisations have slowly recognized the need to engage with faith communities in order to promote development and reduce poverty. But the grounds on which this engagement could best happen have not been theorized yet. By proposing an inductive and inclusive methodology for engagement, where religious values can promote development through processes of public reasoning (dialogue), we hope to have made an initial contribution upon which others can build transformative forms of engaging development and religion in the future.

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[1] Data are for the year 2010 and have been estimated by the Pew Forum. Christianity is the largest religion with 2.2 billion adherents, followed by Islam with 1.6 billion adherents. There are also 1 billion Hindus and nearly 500 million Buddhists (see http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec).

[2] See http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/07/12/global-conference-religion-sustainable-development.

[3] The Team is linked to the United Nation Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development (see http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/brief/faith-based-organizations).

[4] For discussions on the difficulties in defining religion, see Asad (2009), Rakodi (2012) and Tomalin (2013).

[5] For an empirical study of the dynamic interaction between development and religion in Peru, see Arellano-Yanguas (2014). He examines the involvement of the Catholic Church in social conflicts arising from natural resources extraction. See Rubin, Smiddle & Junge (2014) for further discussions on the dynamic relationship between religion and development in Latin America.

[6] See also the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities at http://jliflc.com/resources/religion-sustainable-development-issue/, and Sidibé (2016).

[7] In her description of the work of two non-governmental organisations in West Bengal that deal with girls' health, Ghatak (2006) discusses why the organisations decided to concentrate only on medical issues even though the religious dimension was essential to their lives. This was because of the specific Indian context and the heightened conflict between religious groups, which would have been exacerbated by including religion in their interventions.

[8] See Islamic Relief (2014) for an engagement with Qur'anic verses on the right, among others, to health.

[9] We follow the convention of quoting encyclicals by the initials of the words of its title, followed by the paragraph number.

[10] The encyclical is also self-critical about how some Christians have misinterpreted the book of Genesis to justify depletion of natural resources for the sake of economic growth (see LS 67).

[11] For an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching, see Dorr (2016) and Hornsby-Smith (2006).

[12] In development, this inductive method has been better known through the works of Paulo Freire and his pedagogy for the oppressed, which is based on this pastoral circle, see Gibson (1999) and Freire (1987).

[13] LS follows the Second Vatican Council, which introduced changes in the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, from a 'fortress Church' to a 'pilgrim Church' that dialogues and journeys together with other communities, whether of faith or of none, especially for the promotion of the common good. See Faggioli (2012) and Madelin (2004).

[14] One author of this paper co-organized and attended all the workshops.

[15] The methodology and outcome of the exercise were analyzed by academics from different disciplines (development studies, economics, anthropology, philosophy, theology, natural science and politics) during an international seminar at the University of Leuven (held 16-18 February 2017).

[16] In cases where a significant proportion of participants did not profess Catholicism (e.g. the dialogue in Ethiopia), ecumenical or inter-religious celebrations took place.

[17] This is a 50-year plan of action for long-term development in Africa signed by leaders of the African Union, for whom the ecological and social aspects of development are also intertwined (see http://agenda2063.au.int).

[18] The declaration was signed by a number of Islamic leaders in Istanbul in August 2015 (see http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change).

[19] Caritas Internationalis is the Federation which coordinates 160 independent Catholic charities worldwide.

[20] See Alkire (2015), Alkire & Deneulin (2009), Alkire *et al*. (2008), Deneulin (2014), Nussbaum (2000, 2011), Robeyns (2016), Sen (1985, 1992, 1993, 1999). See also a long list of references to the secondary literature on the capability approach in Sen (2017a, p 485).

[21] Wolff & De-Shalit (2007, p. 74) propose a definition of capability as a 'genuine opportunity for secure functioning'. Wolff and De-Shalit (2013) argue that it is not so much freedom of choice that matters but freedom to reach a valuable functioning in one's own way, and to sustain it over time.

[22] The problem of the definition of valuable capabilities has been well discussed in the literature. See, among others, Alkire (2008), Claassen (2011), Nussbaum (2000, 2011), Robeyns (2003, 2005), Sen (2004).

[23] For a discussion on ethics and economics, see, Peil & Van Staveren (2009), Sen, Basu & Kanbur (2009), White & van Staveren (2010). For a discussion of the capability approach to technology, see Kleine (2013), Oosterlaken (2016), Van den Hoven and Oosterlaken (2012); for a discussion about the value-based dimension of the social sciences, see, among others, Putnam (2004), Sayer (2011), Taylor (1985).

[24] For a discussion of Sen's non-ideal theory of justice, see, among others, Gledhill (2014), Osmani (2010), Richardson (2012), Robeyns (2012).

[25] See also Sayer (2011) for a case-by-case approach using a given capability deprivation as the starting point for engaging with values in the social sciences.

[26] On the importance of reasoning and sympathy in the context of famines, Sen writes: 'The political compulsion in a democracy to eliminate famines depends critically on the power of public reasoning in making non-victims take on the need to eradicate famines their own commitment. Democratic institutions can be effective only if

different sections of the population appreciate what is happening to others, and if the political process reflects a broader social understanding of deprivation' (Sen, 2015, p. xxxvii). See also Drèze & Sen (2013).

[27] 'Global examination of each other's position is feasible if people go into it with genuine curiosity, rather than a sense of racial, or ethnic, or national superiority. Barriers to communication may come often from the arrogance of the more powerful rather than from the intellectual or educational limitation of the downtrodden' (Sen, 2017a, p. 432).

[28] Yet the Pope is aware that dialogue between religion and the social sciences is not straightforward, as 'there are those who firmly reject the idea of a Creator, or consider it irrelevant, and consequently dismiss as irrational the rich contribution which religions can make towards an integral ecology and the full development of humanity' (LS 62). Yet, when dialogue between religion and the social sciences take place, it can be fruitful for both (LS 62).

[29] For a thorough explanation of Biblical narratives as great (or classic) art or literature, see Schneiders (1991).

[30] For further discussion on the connection between the capability approach and the Catholic social tradition, see Deneulin (2013), Schulz (2016), and Zampini-Davies (2014).

[31] See Johnson (1992), McEnroy (1996), and Schüssler Fiorenza (1993).

[32] See, among others, Easterly (2015), Langford (2016), Pogge & Sengupta (2016).

[33] Sen uses the story to make the point about the reality of incomplete rankings, and to explain that situations that cannot be ranked against each other are not a reason for indecision. For example, the inability to rank carbon market mechanism against carbon emissions regulation, as a 'better' alternative to reduce carbon emission, should not be a reason for choosing none of the two alternatives, or for taking no decision and action.